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NOTES OF THE WEEK

WE go to press in the most difficult of all circumstances from an editorial point of view. We do not even know, as we write, whether these words will see the light of day. The whole position is at the moment in a state of flux. The General Strike was unconditionally called off by the T.U.C. on Wednesday, as from midnight of that day, but Thursday morning finds little or no general resumption of work, and how long these conditions will last it is impossible to say. In these circumstances comment is hazardous. Anything said now may well be out-of-date in twenty-four hours' time.

It appears that when men reported for work on Thursday morning, railway and transport companies informed them that they could not be taken back on the old terms. Precisely what the conditions were on which the companies were prepared to re-engage them was not at first clear, but they were mainly concerned with certain modifications in the existing terms of contract—presumably those regarding the right to strike without notice, and so on. The Federation of Master Printers and the Newspaper Society notified the employees that all previous contracts are at an end and that men can only be taken back on day to day contracts, pending a "national settlement" in the printing trade. The Newspaper Proprietors' Association announced that they had decided "not to re-engage any of the staff who were on strike at noon on Wednesday until the Association had considered the terms of such re-engagement." On Thursday morning, therefore, virtually no workers

in any trade involved in the General Strike were back at work. The return of strikers to work is presumably only a matter of such time as it may take to reach amicable agreements on these points.

Some modifications in the terms of contract between employers and men in certain unions is desirable without a doubt. In particular the Nat-sopas, who caused all the trouble by their precipitate and unjustifiable action in refusing to produce the *Daily Mail* on the night preceding the strike, and whose activities have for too long savoured of tyranny—in particular this union must expect a different attitude to be adopted towards it in the future by employers. In other unions, also, there may be justification for changes. First reports told of stipulations by the companies involving wage reductions, but these were subsequently denied. We are profoundly thankful both for the good name of the companies concerned and for the cause of peace that there has proved to be no truth in them.

To pursue a policy of wage reductions would have been to turn the knife in the wound. The men have been sadly victimized by their leaders, who led them blindly into a futile strike, and to have returned to work to find themselves victimized by their employers would have been fatal to their self-respect. The country has no quarrel with the workers as individuals, and it would not stand for this action on the part of the employers. The nation was fighting the T.U.C. for taking an unjustifiable and—as many hold—an illegal step. It was "up against" the unions. It has defeated them. It does not mean to see individual

IT WILL PAY YOU
to investigate the
possibilities of the

Remington

BOOK-KEEPING
MACHINES

3 Demonstration at your
convenience

members of those unions made to suffer permanently in their pockets. It will never agree to anything that seems like taking an unfair advantage.

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Of one thing we are very sure, and that is that any recriminatory or punitive action will receive no countenance from Mr. Baldwin. It is utterly in opposition to the whole tone and spirit of his pronouncements. Speaking in the Commons immediately after the strike had been called off he said: "It is of the utmost importance, at a moment like this, that the whole British people should not look backwards but forwards, and that we should resume our work in a spirit of co-operation, putting behind us all malice and all vindictiveness."

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Later, the following official statement was issued:

"His Majesty's Government have no power to compel employers to take back every man who has been on strike, nor have they entered into any obligations of any kind in this matter.

"Some displacements are inevitable in view of the reduction of business consequent upon the strike, as well as any obligations which may have been entered into by employers towards volunteers who have helped them to carry on during the last week. Attention is, however, drawn to the hope expressed by the Prime Minister in his statement in the House of Commons, 'that we should resume our work in a spirit of co-operation, putting behind us all malice and all vindictiveness.'"

We will leave it at that.

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The greatest tragedy of the whole lamentable affair is the way in which the men have been led astray by their leaders. They see now to what a pass they have been brought. If they imagined when they went into the strike that a trade union is a truly democratic institution, an unmixed blessing, they can have few illusions left now. There will not be another general strike in a hurry. Nor are men likely to consent to come out without a ballot. In this sense the outcome of the strike may well be salutary. The unions must, where necessary, be deprived of unjustifiable powers, and to that end agreements are now under discussion between employers and the unions.

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If the general strike was a revolutionary movement, as we were told, it was surely the most unrevolutionary revolution the world has ever known. The men on strike were perfectly orderly: everyone fought with kid gloves. Such disturbances as have taken place have been caused chiefly by hooligan elements which are ready to take advantage of any abnormal situation, and not by the strikers at all. There was no interference with food, no talk of violence or bloodshed. In Plymouth, strikers played a football match against the local police. In a midland town strikers assisted the police to keep order. A not unamusing commentary on our national sense of orderliness is afforded by the news that following a clash between Royalists and the police in Paris last week during the Jeanne d'Arc celebrations, no fewer than 118 gendarmes were conveyed to hospital. In all Britain, during ten days of a nation-wide industrial upheaval, we doubt whether so many as a dozen policemen had to receive medical attention.

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The *Times* is righteously indignant with the Government for seizing supplies of paper belonging to it for use on their own organ, the *British Gazette*. We share

that indignation. We do not forget that earlier in the dispute the Government also seized supplies of paper belonging to the strikers' organ, the *British Worker*, but even such divine impartiality does not make two wrongs into a right. Throughout the strike the *Times*, alone among daily newspapers, has maintained an adequate daily report of events. Its four pages have certainly contained better value for money than the ill-conditioned sheet produced under the ægis of Mr. Winston Churchill. Its Parliamentary reports alone have justified its unhampered continuance throughout the strike, and the action of the Government in seizing supplies from this independent journal in order to feed its own paper was at that juncture an unjustifiable use of its powers.

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The Government made a serious mistake in refusing at first to broadcast the appeal of the Churches sent them by the Primate. It was a good statement, impartial, and conceived in a spirit of Christian justice. The mistake of refusing it (not to mention Mr. Churchill's foolish and contemptuous remark in the House, that he had not read "this particular item") was seized upon by the other side and used for all it was worth—and more—to foster the impression that the Government, or certain elements in it, did not desire peace, but were working for a "fight to a finish." If there had been a fight to a finish it would have been a real finish, with only a ruined country on which to build a useless structure of agreement. Those who talked about a fight to a finish were crazy.

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"The best-laid plans o' mice and men aft gang agley."—Those who had dreamed and schemed a general strike during the years since the war, imagined, no doubt, that a national stoppage would mean paralysis complete. It has meant nothing of the kind, and largely because of a modern invention which the strikers had reckoned without. Had the stoppage taken effect in 1919 or in 1921 (as it so nearly did) it might have caused far greater confusion, for then there was no broadcasting service. As it is, thanks to the existence of the B.B.C., the Government never really lost touch with the nation. Then the Government began printing large quantities (about two million copies a day) of its official organ, the *British Gazette*, and what with that, and the Broadcasting service, and the *British Worker*, and such other sheets as struggled into print, the public was able to glean quite a lot of news—though most of it was dull and monotonous enough—despite the stoppage of the printers.

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Even the strike has had its bright side. As soon as it broke out special correspondents of most of the important European newspapers hurried to London to follow the course of the revolution in Great Britain, for the more sensational and widely circulated English newspapers have printed so much from time to time about the Red peril here that other countries held grossly distorted views of our industrial situation. All these correspondents have, of course, gone away immensely impressed by the fundamental sanity of the British public. The Parisians realize that, had they remained at home, they would have seen more arrests in their native city in one day, owing to the troubles during the Jeanne d'Arc celebrations, than they have seen in this country during the whole of the strike. However disastrous the economic consequences of the strike may be, it is some consolation to realize the influence British political tolerance and democracy may have in a world which was once more growing to believe that salvation may only be found in militarism and dictatorship.

The capitulation of the Riffs can now be only a matter of weeks. Had France been the only European Power involved in Morocco, the Ujda Peace Conference would have succeeded, but the Spaniards, in whose territory the Riff tribes live, insisted on armistice terms which Sidi Mohamed Azerkane might have been able to accept, but which Abdel Krim himself, who has had less contact with his enemies, has found too humiliating. Since negotiations have broken down, it is to be hoped that speedy military action by France and Spain, who have been carrying on their preparations steadily throughout the winter, will meet with rapid success, and that, at their conclusion, neither Spaniards nor French will forget that even among uneducated Arabs a certain measure of generosity will pay in the long run far better than terms founded on the *vae victis* principle.

Such news as reaches us of the special committee to study the reorganization of the League of Nations Council is encouraging. M. Motta, one of the strongest pillars of the League, has been made President, and the representative of the Argentine, who is certainly not likely to further Brazil's claims, is Vice-President. Many of the smaller Powers urge that the only solution of the problem of permanent seats is to abolish them altogether. Great Britain and France could afford to agree to this, since they would always be sure of re-election, but other permanent members, notably Italy, dislike the proposal, since their status as Great Powers is less obvious. Lord Cecil, the British representative on the Commission, has proposed that the temporary members should be increased from six to nine and that they should be elected "on the basis of proportional representation." It has yet to be seen, however, how such a proposal could conciliate Brazil and the other candidates for permanent seats.

One more country has appealed to the League for assistance. We have already drawn attention to the dangerous situation that has arisen in Bulgaria owing to the immense influx of refugees from Macedonia and elsewhere. The Government has allotted land to several thousands of these people, but even so there remain at least a hundred thousand for whom nothing has as yet been done and who are easy prey for the subversive propagandist. For some time Bulgaria has hoped for a loan under the auspices of the League but while the Tsankoff Government was in power the foreign money markets were unfriendly. Bulgaria, however, has now requested the League Council to consider at its session next month the possibility of raising a small loan for the settlement of these refugees, and the fact that this request has been made means that it will probably be acceded to, since no country can afford to run the risk of a rebuff in such a matter. Should the loan succeed, one more European danger will have disappeared.

We are not often in agreement with *Pravda* or the other official organs of Bolshevism, but there is a good deal of commonsense in this paper's defence of the Russo-German Treaty, the object of which, it says, is to strengthen the friendly relations between two great countries. "Does the conclusion of Treaties to such an end," it asks, "figure on the programme of the League or not?" Fortunately even in France more and more people seem to agree that it does, and there is some hope that the rather discreditable Press campaign will die down. The political crises in

Poland and Germany, however, are unfortunate. Should the Luther Government resign over what is a purely domestic question, its successor might be a little less ready to conciliate the other Locarno Signatory Powers. And the disappearance of Count Skrzynski over another domestic issue in Poland may make it difficult for M. Briand to persuade the Poles that the Treaty increases rather than lessens the importance of bringing Germany into the League.

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If Moscow has its way, the Russo-German Treaty will not be by any means the only one of its kind. Advances to Poland have not met with much success, since it suits the Polish book better to argue that the Treaty with Germany is aimed at the Poles. But negotiations with the other Baltic Powers, which met with failure in 1922, may now be resumed. Besides the offer to Poland proposals for non-aggression treaties have been received in Finland, Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuania. A separate treaty of this nature will probably be concluded with Lithuania, but the other Border States have decided that, if they negotiate at all, they will do so collectively. These Russian advances are doubtless intended to make it appear that Moscow, and not Geneva, is the peace capital of Europe. But, since the Border States have insisted that they will sign no treaty which is not based on the League Covenant, Western Europe need feel no alarm at the increasing number of threads connecting Russia with other European Powers.

THE USES OF VICTORY

UNCONDITIONAL surrender by the T.U.C. on Wednesday marked the end of the futile General Strike, which never need have begun. The Government stood firm to its original declaration that no reopening of negotiations could be reconsidered until the strike had been unreservedly called off. In ten days they won complete victory. So far, the nation has cause to congratulate itself and to congratulate the Government. The situation is by no means clear as we write, because of the action of many employers in refusing to take men back on the old terms. On this we comment elsewhere. But presumably the way is now clear for negotiations to be reopened between miners and owners, in accordance with the Prime Minister's promise. The strike out of the way, we are back at the *status quo*, after ten days of disastrous and unnecessary stoppage. Before we discuss the uses to which the Government and nation's victory is to be put, we may briefly set out the terms of the memorandum embodying the conclusions reached in consultation between the T.U.C. and Sir Herbert Samuel, as a result of which the leaders decided to call off the strike. Following are the letters exchanged between Sir Herbert and Mr. Pugh, Chairman of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress:

Dear Mr. Pugh,

As the outcome of the conversations which I have had with your Committee, I attach a memorandum embodying the conclusions that have been reached.

I have made it clear to your Committee from the outset that I have been acting entirely on my own initiative, have received no authority from the Government, and can give no assurances on their behalf.

I am of opinion that the proposals embodied in the Memorandum are suitable for adoption, and are likely to promote a settlement of the differences in the Coal Industry.

I shall strongly recommend their acceptance by the Government when the negotiations are renewed.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) HERBERT SAMUEL.

Sir Herbert Samuel,
London.

May 12, 1926.

Dear Sir,—

The General Council having carefully considered your letter of to-day and the memorandum attached to it, concurred in your opinion that it offers a basis on which the negotiations upon the conditions in the Coal Industry can be renewed.

They are taking the necessary measures to terminate the General Strike, relying upon the public assurances of the Prime Minister as to the steps that would follow. They assume that during the resumed negotiations the subsidy will be renewed and that the lock-out notices to the Miners will be immediately withdrawn.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) ARTHUR PUGH, Chairman.
WALTER M. CITRINE, Acting Secretary.

These are the terms of the Memorandum :—

1. The negotiations upon the conditions of the coal industry should be resumed, the subsidy being renewed for such reasonable period as may be required for that purpose.
2. Any negotiations are unlikely to be successful unless they provide for means of settling disputes in the industry other than conferences between the mineowners and the miners alone. A National Wages Board should, therefore, be established, which would include representatives of those two parties, with a neutral element and an independent chairman. The proposals in this direction tentatively made in the Report of the Royal Commission should be pressed and the powers of the proposed Board enlarged.
3. The parties to the Board should be entitled to raise before it any points they consider relevant to the issue under discussion, and the Board should be required to take such points into consideration.
4. There should be no revision of the previous wage rates, unless there are sufficient assurances that the measures of re-organization proposed by the Commission will be effectively adopted. A Committee should be established as proposed by the Prime Minister, on which representatives of the men should be included, whose duty it should be to co-operate with the Government in the preparation of the legislative and administrative measures that are required. The same Committee, or, alternatively, the National Wages Board, should assure itself that the necessary steps, so far as they relate to matters within the industry, are not being neglected or unduly postponed.
5. After these points have been agreed and the Mines National Wages Board has considered every practicable means of meeting such immediate financial difficulties as exist, it may, if that course is found to be absolutely necessary, proceed to the preparation of a wage agreement.
6. Any such agreement should
 - (i) if practicable, be on simpler lines than those hitherto followed.
 - (ii) Not adversely affect in any way the wages of the lowest-paid men.
 - (iii) Fix reasonable figures below which the wage of no class of labour, for a normal customary week's work, should be reduced in any circumstances.
 - (iv) In the event of any new adjustments being made should provide for the revision of such adjustments by the Wages Board from time to time if the facts warrant that course.
7. Measures should be adopted to prevent the recruitment of new workers, over the age of 18 years, into the industry if unemployed miners are available.
8. Workers who are dislocated as a consequence of the closing of uneconomic collieries should be provided for by
 - (a) The transfer of such men as may be mobile, with the Government assistance that may be required, as recommended in the Report of the Royal Commission.
 - (b) The maintenance, for such period as may be fixed, of those who cannot be so transferred, and for whom alternative employment cannot be found: this maintenance to comprise an addition to the existing rate of unemployment pay under the Unemployment Insurance Act, of such amount as may be agreed. A contribution should be made by the Treasury to cover the additional sums so disbursed.
 - (c) The rapid construction of new houses to accommodate transferred workers. The Trades Union Congress will facilitate this by consultation and co-operation with all those who are concerned.

Reading between the lines, we discover, first, that though the surrender of the T.U.C. was unconditional,

it is not improbable that it was preceded by some indirect assurance to the unions that the Government would accept the memorandum as a basis of negotiation. Sir Herbert Samuel is insistent in declaring that he is acting "entirely on his own initiative," but he adds that he will "strongly recommend" the acceptance of the proposals "by the Government, when the negotiations are renewed." That clearly means all that it says. What are these proposals which the Government are to be strongly urged to accept? We need only draw special attention to a few. They embody, in the first place, a temporary continuation of the subsidy, which means that the lock-out notices can be withdrawn and no wage reductions enforced during negotiations. Secondly, they include the institution of a Wages Board, with independent representation. Thirdly, they stipulate that no wage reductions should be made until there are "sufficient assurances" that the measures of re-organization proposed by the Coal Commission will be effectively adopted. This is a most important point, and one for which the unions claimed to have been fighting. Fourthly, they propose that any wage agreement reached by the Wages Board should "not adversely affect in any way the wages of the lowest paid men," and should "fix reasonable figures below which the wage of no class of labour . . . should be reduced in any circumstances." These conditions embody sufficient assurances that the miners will get a "square deal" in the coming negotiations, and enabled the T.U.C.—with what relief may be imagined—to call off the strike and yet save their faces.

It is satisfactory to know that, the General Strike being defeated, the miners are to receive fair treatment. Mr. Baldwin's sincerity of purpose has never been open to doubt. Victory has been won, and it must be used in the right way. Originally, this dispute was a dispute over miners' wages. Let it now return to that. While the strike was on, only the strike mattered. Now that it is over, let it matter no more. The country must concentrate now on the fundamental question of the mining industry, not waste its energies and compromise its future in useless or dangerous recriminations. Throughout this crisis we have found the voice of sanity always issuing from Mr. Baldwin, who undoubtedly expresses to a remarkably accurate and complete extent the wishes of the great bulk of the nation. In his broadcast message during the strike he sounded exactly the right note. In his message on Wednesday night, when the strike was over, his sentiments were equally admirable. "Our business," he said, "is not to triumph over those who have failed in a mistaken attempt. It is rather to rally them together with the population as a whole in an attempt to restore the well-being of the nation." "Our whole duty at the moment is to forget all recrimination. Let employers act with generosity and workers put their whole hearts loyally into their work. Waste no time in determining the share of the blame for anything." And again, "Let us, whatever view of the disturbance we take, bind ourselves in a spirit of true comradeship to preserve, develop, and maintain the industries of the country." These things may be difficult, but they are possible and they are necessary. The need is all for peace. Vindictiveness after victory has led repeatedly in history to reprisals and renewed strife. If workers are to be forced in their hour of defeat to accept standards of wages for which there is no honest justification there can only be continued industrial strife in store for us. There is an opportunity now for a gesture of generosity such as may set the engines of industry running smoothly with the oil of goodwill and content. There is equally an opportunity for setting by a store of ill-feeling. Will the country and the employers follow the Prime Minister's lead?

THE COMEDY OF WESTMINSTER

House of Commons, Thursday

THERE are two parties in the State to-day. The line that divides them should be emphasized and the position of prominent individuals with regard to that line should be defined. There are some who hold that the declaration of a general strike was justifiable and who hoped that that strike would accomplish its ends. There are others who maintain that it was illegal, unconstitutional and anti-democratic and who believe that only its complete and utter failure and unconditional withdrawal could save the country from disaster. That being the question that divides opinion, where do our Parliamentary leaders stand? The leader of the Socialist Party has in unmeasured terms condemned the idea of a general strike, and when reminded of the written words in which he condemned it has unhesitatingly affirmed that he stands by every one of them. Mr. Thomas has asserted that he has never been in favour of a general strike and that it would be a disaster for the country if it were to succeed. While the strike was on we saw very little of these Right Honourable Gentlemen in the House of Commons. They were doubtless busily engaged elsewhere. It would be interesting, however, to learn the direction of their activities. Were they endeavouring to assist the strike or to defeat it? If the former, they were acting against their declared convictions; if the latter, they were acting against their Party and should resign their positions as leaders of it.

* * *

During the debates which have taken place throughout these fateful days of May, the real issue has frequently been lost sight of. The dispute in the coal industry had as little importance while the strike was on as had the question of the levy of ship money on that "certain day in August, 1642, after which those who had met in peace, and sat at the same tables, and were allied by marriage or by blood, never smiled upon each other again, nor met but in the field of battle . . ." The issue then was whether or no Parliament was to govern and it has been the issue again these last days. Mr. Winston Churchill, in the speech which was intended to wind up the debate on Monday, May 3, laid emphasis upon this aspect of the situation. The speeches that day had been upon both sides moderate and conciliatory. Mr. Churchill's—perhaps because his logic was cleaner cut, perhaps because his voice and gestures were more dramatic—sounded less compromising. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald listened indignantly, Mr. Thomas made gestures of despair, while those Conservatives who were waiting for a bugle call imagined that they had heard it at last. But consultation of the official report on the following morning revealed not one word that could justly be called provocative, nor one sentiment that could reasonably be impugned.

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Sir John Simon has delivered two important speeches in the course of these debates. The fact that he was going to make his first speech on Thursday night was widely known and the behaviour of the Socialist Party in refusing to listen to it and leaving the House in a body was as inexplicable as it was unpardonable. They have twice before adopted these particularly puerile tactics, but on each occasion they could put forward some excuse, however inadequate, for this action. For this last breach of Parliamentary manners they have offered no defence whatever. They knew that a speech was to be delivered by one of the leaders of the Liberal Party, who is also one of the foremost legal authorities in the country; it was to

deal with the very issue which so closely concerns them, but rather than listen to it they preferred to skulk in the smoking room or to hurry home to bed at 11 o'clock. The real importance of this speech lay not so much in the opinion delivered as to the illegality of the strike as in the speaker's own uncompromising condemnation of it and in the support which he obviously received from nearly the whole of the Liberal Party who were sitting behind him and cheering every sentiment he expressed. One prominent Liberal alone was absent. Mr. Lloyd George had gone home.

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The part played in this crisis by the man whose boast it once was that he had won the war will be remembered both by his own party and by the people. Nine months ago he condemned the Government for paying the subsidy and taunted it with being afraid of cold steel; when the subsidy came to an end he attacked the Government for not renewing it. In these moments of danger he has asserted the duty of supporting the Government and has missed no opportunity of creating prejudice against it. In speeches of transparent insincerity he has angled for the support of the Labour Party. A few of the less reflective have occasionally fallen into the trap and been decoyed into supporting him with their cheers, but those with longer memories and keener vision have resisted the voice of the tempter and met his advances with contemptuous silence. Meanwhile the Liberals have sat with consternation and shame upon their faces with the solitary exception of Commander Kenworthy, who for the first time has become the lieutenant of his ancient adversary.

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More interesting and more edifying has been the behaviour of the Labour Party. Their trial has been a stern one. The size of the majority against them in the House of Commons has never been so evident as during these days when Conservatives have come down in full force. The knowledge that they are fighting a losing cause must have been constantly present to the wiser minds among them. The conduct of their opponents has not always been calculated to calm their passions. Their own leaders have to a large extent ceased to lead. In these circumstances they have shown forbearance, moderation and good temper. When official reports once more become available they will be found to contain little that anybody need regret. The more violent members of the Labour Party have taken refuge in silence; it is even reported that one of them, anxious not to be provocative but doubtful of his own powers of self-control, migrated to Glasgow in order to run no risk. However wrong their opinions may be, however heavy may be their responsibility for the great disaster, they have at any rate become during the crisis Parliament men and have behaved in a manner worthy of the traditions of Parliament.

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They have, of course, endeavoured to focus attention upon the question of the mines and have missed no opportunity of reminding the House of the hardships endured by miners. The real issue they have studiously avoided. Not one single speech has been delivered by any of the leaders or of the rank and file in which the question of the justification of the general strike has been seriously tackled, nor has the contention that it constitutes a direct challenge to Parliamentary Government ever been controverted. Conservatives and Liberals together represent an overwhelming majority of an electorate exercising almost universal suffrage which was consulted only eighteen months ago. It was the will of the majority which was being contested and unless that will had prevailed the Comedy of Westminster must have become a farce.

FIRST CITIZEN

A HOLIDAY FROM NEWS

LEAVE out of account the supremely tragic situations, and there is none more pitiable than that of the journalist starved of news and denied all opportunity for the exercise of his little talent. For so many years news has been to him almost as necessary as the air he breathes, and he has taken it for granted that it will always be available to him. Born with a particular kind of susceptibility, he has cultivated it till he has become tremulously responsive to whatever the cable and the telephone may bring him. He has acquired the faculty of reacting instantly to every sort of stimulus, and being passionately concerned without notice about matters to which he gave no thought yesterday and will give none to-morrow. But now! All stimulants are cut off. There he is, poor devil, with his sensibility as elaborately cultivated, in its way, as any decadent's—like Baudelaire, he could confess that he had developed it "with terror and enthusiasm." But now there is nothing to which his nerves can vibrate. Something must be happening in China, in Peru; the human comedy must be in full swing all over the world. But here there is nothing except the strike. Not a scrap of news from abroad; nothing from the provinces but what relates to the strike; not a murder, for those who commit murders have apparently come out in sympathy; just one divorce, reported with a desolating decency; not a book to review. . . .

What a situation! But how terrible it is when the most fatuous of one's friends offer consolation! The long pause in work will afford one time to think, they urge. No real journalist can think except under the spur of necessity. Spring the surprising thing on him, tell him there are just so many minutes before his note or leader or what not must be on the editorial desk or in the paws of the printer's devil, and his wits will work with astonishing speed. But set him down in his present situation and his mind will become a perfect blank—"not even the line circumscribing the zero but the emptiness contained by that line." He cannot think at large, without occasion, without prospect of seeing the result of his mental processes put into print. Deny him news and he will fade away into imbecility. Already on certain faces in the street of ink there is coming that look of abstraction which alienists know. Decline has set in.

At least among those journalists who have not taken refuge in books. The darkening of London during the war revealed the beauty of her nocturnal sky, inspiring incidentally an admirable little poem, and the cutting off of the supply of new books has enabled some of us to return to the old. "I never quite despair, and I read Shakespeare," said Keats in a crisis. We need not despair if we will but read Wordsworth. Not merely for the supreme things in him, not merely for the peculiar and excellent courage he can always teach us, but for the restful, massive stupidity, which soothes the mind as a large meaningless range of mountains may soothe eyes teased by the ingenuities of which nature has been guilty in too many beauty spots. Wherefore let no one who would be saved read Wordsworth in those accursed selections. If he is to heal us it can only be through our submission to his work in all its amplitude. After the unwonted day's job, as volunteer railway worker or special constable, there is nothing so beneficial as an hour spent over the prosier parts of Wordsworth, blank verse for choice. For here, in a world of exasperation and cleverness and knowingness, is a man too great to be afraid of boring his reader, a man who takes his time, who never frets and fumes, and who, having a great matter to impart, for which in due course he will find great words, is content till the moment comes to drone away. Shame on us that it needed this strike to teach us

that a journalist may live with no more news than that a century ago a poet met the village idiot or the lesser celandine or some such bucolic phenomenon.

Life is apt to commit breach of promise with the journalist. Between the writing of the last paragraph and the writing of this, the strike has ended, and editors who have been comatose these many days are furiously telephoning to inquire whether one will be so infinitely kind as to write two thousand words in not very much more than two minutes on any subject that may have occurred to one, the compliment a little spoiled by the admission that certain eminent contributors are out of reach. One's relief at national deliverance is tempered, it must be confessed, by the thought that there will be no more leisure for Wordsworth. Plain living and abstract thinking are no more. We of the pen are forced back, or allowed back, to the old, great, weary, endlessly exciting game, the wonderful business, sport and slavery of recording, commenting, explaining, and generally assaulting the weak mind of this long-suffering nation. Such are the tricks fate plays with a particularly deserving class of the poor, hurling them into inaction, hauling them back into feverish activity, without the least consideration.

T. E. W.

A HOMESPUN VIRTUE

BY H. C. MINCHIN

IN one of those letters from a gifted brother to a gifted sister which Lord Rosebery brought to light in his work on Chatham, there occurs this memorable injunction:

Preserve cheerfulness enough to give your understanding a fair light.

The sequel showed how needful was the advice. The spirits of Ann Pitt lost their equability with advancing years; and the death of her great brother, which robbed her of whatever "cheerfulness" she had till then retained, darkened effectually the fair light of her understanding. We that are the countrymen and the countrywomen of that remarkable pair, even though we have escaped the bodily miseries which beset but could not subdue the genius of their family, shall not be losing our labour if we linger, for a few moments, over Chatham's apophthegm. Just as nature, in the course of ages, invests her creatures with protective forms and colours, so man gradually arrives by experience at the virtues most proper to his condition; and the quality enjoined by Chatham is often the product of a seemingly unfavourable soil and exceptionally trying circumstances. For it is the lesser ills of life that make men grumble; the heavier rubs put them on their mettle. Pepys tells us, to take an extreme case, that Major-General Harrison displayed remarkable cheerfulness at his execution. His, no doubt, was an exceptionally robust spirit; but men often achieve this virtue, whether from self-regarding or altruistic instincts, amid discouraging surroundings.

But is cheerfulness, after all, a virtue, and, if so, when canonized? If it existed among the Greeks, it existed as an instinct, as something taken for granted but not consciously looked in the face, much as the unscientific many take for granted the atmosphere they breathe. In their literature it almost escapes mention. It finds no place in Aristotle's categories, and he presumably regarded it as something trivial and negligible. Nor may one

lightly associate it with "the steady Roman," whose fate it was "to shake the world." Something of it may be discerned in Horace; but scarcely in any other Latin author. A reasoned melancholy pervades the prose of Tacitus and Sallust and the majestic verse of Lucretius; while Vergil is a poet of undertones and almost unbroken gravity. In the New Testament "the cheerful giver" will occur to everyone, and there is also the admonition, "he that sheweth mercy (let him shew it) with cheerfulness" (*εν ιλαρότητι*). Otherwise no mention of this quality; much indeed of joy, but that is a different gift, enskied, ennobled. So that if one should urge cheerfulness upon another, and that other asks for its credentials, the facile adviser might be for the moment at a stand. Let us therefore take upon us the office of Procurator of the Poor—sustained so ably by Dominus Hyacinthus de Archangelis in a certain murder case of note—and see what is to be said for this Cinderella, this ugly duckling among the virtues, this poor relative of bravery, charity, magnanimity, and the remaining members of a shining company.

It is not the *gaieté* of the Frenchman, nor is it the *allegresse* of the Italian; the first is more akin to hilarity; the second to vivacity; while cheerfulness is clad in the sober mantle of a deliberate choice. It seems a northern attribute, and may be claimed as particularly English. "As compared with the Americans," wrote Emerson, "I think the English cheerful and contented." True, he wrote before "to grouse" had acquired its present meaning. Roses thrive in clay, and cheerfulness blossoms in a clime notoriously parent of the vapours and the spleen; not found at every turning, but, when found, of a growth and luxuriance that need not fear comparison; a standing argument for pragmatism, since it is a chief factor in the fostering maintenance of a friendship, a relationship, a society. Cheerfulness has known vicissitudes; has outlived the frowns of Puritans, and will survive the grim earnestness of collectivists. Once it was staggered by a shrewd blow from the hand of a friend—the hand that drew Mark Tapley. In Mark Tapley the cheerful disposition is cruelly travestied. Tapley did not even impose upon our unsuspecting childhood. The notion of one who spends his life in looking for really dismal circumstances, so that he may have the chance of "coming out strong," is an insult to the greenest intelligence. Such a man there never was, we feel, and, if there had been, he would have been unendurable. He could not have been sincere in his quest, and the effect of cheerfulness is undone by the least suspicion of a pose. The counterfeit coin will not pass muster. Few things are more detestable than fictitious cheerfulness, with however good intention it be assumed. The assumption defeats its object; it promotes the depression which it desires to banish.

Strictly, cheerfulness is indefensible. A survey of the field of human misery stamps it as an outrage. If in our mirth we should pause to consider the amount of suffering which is every hour's portion, if we allowed our imagination to overhear the cries which at any one moment are going up to heaven, our cheerful cup would turn to gall, for bread we should have tears. There would be no heart in us for anything but grief. And then the struggle would be over, life impossible, only an end to it desirable. But half a score of influences save us

from this despairing conclusion; the sense of life's persistence, the consciousness that misery is our secular foe, with whom no truce is possible, and that cheerfulness is one of our best weapons in the fray. If we are to attempt to make life tolerable for others, we must somehow find it tolerable ourselves. And so this virtue of the hearth, this homespun virtue, logically so heartless, actually so heartening, emerges as a social quality of far-reaching and sustaining force. It fights in line with other and more starry champions, a serene smile upon its lips.

Thus considered, cheerfulness is an altruistic virtue; but it is also, as Chatham has reminded us, a self-regarding one. "Preserve cheerfulness enough to give your understanding a fair light." No wise man can afford to disregard this warning. Much of the "grouching" in which people indulge nowadays is a species of irony; but a settled habit of grumbling makes existence burdensome. Dr. Johnson's friend, who had vainly tried to be a philosopher, "for somehow cheerfulness always came breaking in," laboured under a delusion; in supposing a philosopher to be a man of gloom, he clearly begged the question. Socrates, for instance, was probably one of the most cheerful beings who ever lived. Chatham, with his penetrative instinct, goes to the heart of the matter. If our intellects are to be clear, and our judgments sane, we must be reasonably cheerful. For this quality has something of the properties that Falstaff attributes to a good sherrisack:

it ascends me into the brain; dries me there all the foolish, and dull, and crudy vapours which environ it; makes it apprehensive, quick, forgetive, full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes.

—holds a fair light, in short, to our understanding. And for reminding them of a truth so patent—when it is insisted on—yet so easily ignored, his countrymen owe yet another debt of gratitude to the genius of Chatham.

A SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL

BY ALFRED WAREING

HOW many of us have kept a roof over our heads or home fires burning, or both, because of an actor who three hundred years or so ago turned his hand to touching up plays, and so found his way to the topmost peak of the world's fame, the blue empyrean! Mr. Q. acts him—"claret crowns his cup." By his works Miss Y.'s Theatre thrives—"straight she turtle eats." Others write about him, lecture upon him, criticize, paint, print and publish and illustrate him, or they clothe his players and paint their scenery; he also serves those who stand ready to shift scenery and those who wait for profit rentals to enhance their bank account. And yet there are some of us who, not taking thought, dishonour his memory by continually "going round with the hat" for the building or buying or endowing of this or that theatre to keep green his memory. Thus a real disservice is done to Shakespeare; the public associates his name with a lost cause, a charity, and the mere trickle that responds to these appeals tells us that we are going the wrong way to serve his great name.

Now Mr. Ivor Brown, in his reasoned and eloquent appeal for Coketown, suggests what might be done, and I can support him from my thirty years in the theatre, including eight years' experience as manager of a Coketown theatre. The memorial Shakespeare deserves from us is not one built with stones either at Stratford or in London. It is a love and understanding in the hearts of his countrymen; so it should be our

endeavour to add to the number of his audiences by more perfect representations of his plays. For without an audience memorial theatres are little better than mausoleums. During each year of my management of the Theatre Royal, Huddersfield, I have engaged one or other of the prominent Shakespearean Touring Companies which, according to their lights, have given their best to audiences made up of the cultured minority and of scholars "swotting" the plays for examinations. These engagements have been so organized that they have never failed to be profitable, though the performances have not attracted the seekers after entertainment, the important people of Coketown where Shakespeare is concerned. This is discouraging when it is remembered that the adolescents of seven or eight years ago who, under the ægis of the educational authorities, became acquainted with Shakespeare in my theatre, should now be numbered in his audiences. Now why is this?

To be honest, one must admit that the public is right. It demands a sacrificing love for Shakespeare to sit out some of the impoverished representations which are the best we can do for our richest dramatic poet. That these companies do their best no one can question; the enthusiasm of the performers is abundant, but enthusiasm is not enough. Too often they are exhibitions of elocutionary ability, where sound is more important than sense, and a dread reverence hovers which lowers the vitality of the whole performance. There are tedious waits between the scenes as well as long intervals between the acts. This is harsh criticism, but the standard I wish to see achieved is a high one. Shakespeare is the best of all, and nothing but the best will do when we handle his works in the theatre.

The best production of a Shakespeare play that I remember was that by Oscar Asche and Lily Brayton of 'The Taming of the Shrew.' In describing it I epitomize what I think the performance of a Shakespeare play should be. It was both vigorous and vivacious, carefully cast so that even the smallest part was perfectly played, what doubles there were most carefully chosen, the costumes were beautiful and worn as though they belonged not to the theatre wardrobe but to their wearers, the scenery realized Italy, it was full of colour—Joseph Harker's best work—while the music, surpassing all the other appurtenances, was a pure delight. The performance went to the merriest of ends at a pace which carried us into the realm of Shakespeare. What a tribute it was to hear from the motley audience such remarks as "Why! It isn't a bit like Shakespeare!" The excellences which made that production of 'The Taming of the Shrew' so successful are beyond the present resources of companies now touring a repertoire of Shakespeare's plays, and not all the plays provide such opportunities; but given the means and the goodwill much may be done by raising the standard of performances to place Shakespeare where he belongs in the esteem and loving understanding of his countrymen.

With emphasis I repeat the only Shakespeare memorial worth sacrifice is a crowded and enthusiastic audience understanding and enjoying a perfect presentation of his plays. Though difficult this is not an impossible achievement. There is an organized body to which all the important theatre managers belong: the Theatrical Managers' Association; its members are not wholly hard-faced business-men, indeed most of them have ideals (Sir Barry Jackson is a member). These control the principal theatres in the provinces, including the Coketown. I believe they would be willing to co-operate with the existing Shakespearean Companies now touring the provinces to the extent of administering a combination of these organizations. Out of the reorganization of this combination three companies could be formed under a centralized management assisted by a subsidy from the income from the capital of the National Memorial

Theatre Fund and by members of the T.M.A. These three companies would tour the provinces, dividing the repertoire among them so that the plays should all be competently performed.

For the information of the layman who only knows that a performance is good or bad without knowing why, I will specify some desirable improvements. The plays should be so arranged that not more than two or three intervals are necessary and no intervals whatsoever (beyond the thirty seconds for changing a cloth) between the scenes; tedious intervals discourage the Coketown theatre-goers from Shakespeare. Remember that most versions have been prepared to give some leading artist greater prominence than the author intended, so the part has become greater than the whole. Restore Hamlet and Shylock to their proper proportions. The music to Shakespeare's plays is of the greatest value and this should be selected, arranged (composed where necessary) and conducted by musicians of proved ability—such as the late Christopher Wilson. It would certainly be necessary to travel one or two instrumentalists; this is an expense which no existing Shakespearean Company can reasonably afford, yet assuredly it would prove a source of revenue. This applies to the singing also, at present Shakespeare's beautiful songs are sung, often very well indeed, by performers chosen for their dramatic gifts. How greatly Shakespeare gains when fine singing and an excellent orchestra are added only those know who have worked both with and without. Then the producer must be carefully chosen and as carefully watched. I do not believe that any one man can produce all or any of the plays any more than one actor can play every part well. The stage-manager who does nothing but stage-manage is a luxury as companies are now constituted; he is really a necessity. He should be a benevolent despot with wide experience, for he must see that all the small parts are perfectly played and keep the embryonic stars in their courses; therefore he cannot play parts and stage manage also. The mounting and dressing of the plays should be done handsomely, pleasing the precious without puzzling or frightening the playgoers of Coketown, for the public love both form and colour. Such artists as Charles Ricketts and S. H. Sime, who have a foot in each camp, would devise excellent productions.

All concerned working together for the same end would make such a combination strong by efficiency and economy and I believe that in a short time these companies would be self-supporting and in a few years profitable. Such companies would rightly be called the National Shakespeare Company and as they toured from town to town would command the respect and goodwill of all who venerate Shakespeare. I firmly believe that in such a way Shakespeare can be made profitable, when the ordinary amusement seeker is attracted to the enjoyment of an evening's good entertainment which would be the talk of the factory, the shop and the mill. It only needs such assistance as I have adumbrated to stimulate in the playgoers of Coketown an appetite for Shakespeare which grows by what it feeds on.

¶ Owing to the strike many of our readers were unable last week to obtain copies of the SATURDAY REVIEW. Although we were able to appear, it was in an abbreviated form—four pages of typescript. There was, however, great demand for that issue, and we had, in fact, to go into a second and a third edition. Even so it was not possible for it to reach a large part of our public owing to difficulties of distribution. To them we offer our apologies, as also for the somewhat curtailed issue of this week, which has, we assure them, been produced under the greatest difficulties.

REVIEWS

AMERICAN HUMOUR

BY EDWARD SHANKS

How to Write Short Stories. Gullible's Travels.
By Ring W. Lardner. Chatto and Windus.
7s. 6d. each.

LATELY I wrote here about American poetry, which is for us, at any rate in such quantities, a comparatively recent article of import. The first distinctly American work in literature to attract the attention of Europe was humorous. The 'Brahmins' and their successors, even down to Henry James, were all a little displeased at the thought that England should regard as characteristically American the productions of such rough and boisterous souls as Mark Twain and Artemus Ward. These might be typical of the new society, but they represented all in it that was distressing to the highly civilized writers of New England. There was much in America life which Boston, with one eye directed nervously across the Atlantic, blushed for. Naturally they were pained when this turned out to be just what England most appreciated.

But England was right. There is much to be said against Mark Twain. He could be on occasion bumptious and vulgar. He was often the very type of the ignorant and shallow-minded American tourist. He was, too, as we know now, a weak and cowardly man, whom fear constrained to suppress his real opinions, though these do not seem to have been startling enough to warrant either concealment or publication. But he was an indigenous growth. In his person America gave the world something which it had not had before, and the same cannot be said of any of the inhabitants of what Poe used to call the frog-pond. And for a long time there was a vague idea in England that "humour" was a specifically American product like chewing-gum or popcorn. A long line of American humorists, down to the creator of Mr. Dooley, were cherished here and certainly less subjected here than in their own country to slighting criticism. With the growth of American literature in all branches, that period in the intellectual relations between the two countries has passed away. But our instinct was right. America has a peculiar gift for humour and continues to put out new shoots.

Mr. Ring W. Lardner is compared by his English publishers with Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Artemus Ward and O. Henry, and he is undeniably in the succession. But, just as those writers were the first indigenous growths in American literature, so their successor continues to lead the van, and he is more foreign to us than they ever were and more foreign than most of his contemporaries. Several of the tales in 'How to Write Short Stories' (which, by the way, is not strictly a technical treatise) describe the lives of baseball players, and long passages in them are impenetrably unintelligible to all, I should judge, but a few English readers. In the first place we do not understand the rules and technique of baseball, which seem to be at least as complicated and subtle as those of cricket. This difficulty is made worse by the fact that baseball has a rich and varied slang of its own. To the question of language I shall return later. But, apart from the slang, how is an English reader to follow the action described in such a passage as this?

In the second innin' they walked him with nobody down, and he took a big lead off first base like he always does. Benton throwed over there three or four times to scare him back, and the last time he throwed, Hobby hid the ball. The coacher seen it and told Speed to hold the bag; but he didn't pay no attention. He started leadin' right off again and Hobby tried to tag him, but the ball slipped out of his hand and rolled about a yard away. Parker had plenty o' time to get back; but, instead o' that, he starts for second. Hobby picked up the ball and shot it down to Orah—and Orah made a square muff.

We have a confused impression that some player has had a piece of luck which he did not deserve, and that is all that is strictly necessary for the action of the story. But the sharpness of Mr. Lardner's invention is lost on us. Elsewhere, though nowhere so much as in the baseball stories, our ignorance both of what he describes and the language he uses inevitably blurs the effect. But when he can be understood it is easy to see how he has gained his reputation and also that he is firmly in the tradition of the great American humorous writers. The plots of operas retold in Chicago slang do not strike me as very amusing, but there is genuine comedy in the hero of 'Gullible's Travels,' the dry-witted, common-sense, ordinary man who has a just appreciation both of himself and others and knows how to express it in his own words. The most pleasing of his experiences is the expedition to Palm Beach, which makes the title-story of the volume.

In the matter of language Mr. Lardner's work deserves serious study. Some years ago Mr. Mencken published an over-sized but exceedingly interesting book in which he sought to prove that the American language has already an existence separate from English. Mr. Lardner, I think, was one of his examples, and Mr. Weaver, the poet, was another. Now here Mr. Mencken was trying to make his examples prove more than they were capable of. Mr. Lardner and Mr. Weaver are both writers in dialect, and dialect is dialect all the world over, not the standard language, whether it originates in Devonshire or Chicago or Shoreditch. Mr. Lardner does not write or even speak himself as he makes his characters speak: there is deliberate comic intent in the phrases he puts into their mouths. But what is interesting in American dialects is that, unlike the various speeches of our own country districts, they are alive and growing. And this being so they cannot fail sooner or later to have a profound influence on the standard language. Indeed that influence is making itself felt in many ways already. The American is modifying our syntax and our grammar, and seems, in particular, to be making a very interesting attempt to reform the conjugation of the verb by doing as much as possible without auxiliaries. Thus where we should say: "He has forgotten his gloves," an American will say, as likely as not: "He forgot his gloves." Where we should say: "They were ordered to be shot," an American will say: "They were ordered shot." Where we should say: "He suggested that we should dine there," an American will say: "He suggested that we dine there." This is only a specimen of many modifications gradually shaping in the spoken language and thence to be transferred to the written, that is, the standard language. In other words, it is in America now that the genius of our language is most active and prolific. In the works of Mr. Lardner, these changes can be foreseen and studied. "Gullible" and his friends, the Hakhes, playing rummy in "Chi," are forging the speech which will be used by the scholars and novelists of a later generation.

ROMANTIC AND CLASSIC

Pushkin. By Prince D. S. Mirsky. Routledge.
6s. net.

THIS monograph only requires a few retouches, a little more consideration, to be trustworthy and valuable. Prince Mirsky is somewhat given to overstatement. High praise of one's author is quite permissible. Pushkin is of international and permanent rank. But what need was there for hyperbole or a scornful rejection of all previous critics. The Russians, it is declared, misinterpret Pushkin; and the Germans slavishly follow the Russian example. The French fail to appreciate Pushkin because he excels them all in qualities they regard as peculiarly

their own; and the English enthusiasts of Russian literature are not of a race likely to understand Pushkin. But surely there is common agreement that Pushkin (1799-1837), along with Gogol, established the national literature. The Russian Novel confessedly derives from the stanzas of 'Eugeni Onegin.' As a portrait of the Russian maiden, that of Tatiana, has never been surpassed. Such general recognition could serve as basis for any superstructure of comment. What Prince Mirsky effects for us is a more satisfactory comprehension of the man behind the work. No longer need we puzzle about Pushkin's change from the dilettante revolutionary to the complete reactionary. His was a genuine development. Pushkin, continuously watched as a political suspect, was no renegade. For the first time, also, we perceive tragic sequence in his love affairs. Of an African sensuality, a Don Juan with a veritable list, he weds incompatibly, is jealous to the height, provokes a duel, and falls. And Prince Mirsky excellently addresses himself to the task of exhibiting, in Pushkin, the succession of consummate blending of romantic and realistic and classical elements.

Pushkin, as we knew, was influenced in turn by Parny, Byron, Shakespeare and André Chénier. But where was the need to disparage Byron from point to point in comparison? The two are wonderfully alike, and sufficiently different. With regard to Pushkin's passage from Romance to Realism, attention should have been drawn to the fact that the European contemporary writers followed the same course. Pushkin was European rather than Russian. While, as regards the classical note, the desire to express universal emotions, one does not see why Prince Mirsky specially connects it with the doctrine of art for art's sake, art as play, virtuosity. Art and life are inseparable. Great art, classic art, to use Racine's phrase, consists in making something out of nothing. The nothing is nothing less than the perennial conditions of human life. The something is the perfect expression of the emotional response in an individual, unforgettable way. However, one can heartily agree with Prince Mirsky that such expression, in the case of Pushkin and his peers, allows no translation. And Pushkin's prose is well commended by him. Shall it be added that, for some of us, the short tales, the surprising cases set forth with all economy of means, inevitably associate themselves with those of Mérimée his admirer? And, were it not that one seems to be depreciating rather than welcoming Prince Mirsky's contribution, one could ask a larger measure of praise for that 'Boris Godunov' which is, very possibly, the best chronical play since Shakespeare set the model.

GERMAN COLONIES

German Colonization: Past and Future. By Dr. Heinrich Schnee. Allen and Unwin. 5s. net.

IT is a good thing for one's peace of mind that there are few books so disquieting as Dr. Heinrich Schnee's defence of Germany's colonizing methods and criticism of the methods of the Mandatory Powers who now control Germany's former overseas possessions. We doubt whether the Germans are quite as white and the ex-allies quite as black as they are painted, but Dr. Schnee, a former Governor of German East Africa, plays havoc with the arguments that were put forward at the Peace Conference and elsewhere to justify the confiscation of the German colonies.

One of Wilson's points, which led to the Armistice, promised "a free, open-minded and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that . . . the interests of the population concerned must have equal

weight with the equitable claims of the Government whose title is to be determined."

But Dr. Schnee quotes Ray Stannard Baker's book on the Peace Conference to show that, when it came to the question of the future of these territories, Wilson discovered, to his surprise, that the Allied Powers, although they had agreed to his principle of "no annexations," had already divided up the spoils, by a series of secret treaties. A compromise was found in the mandatory system under which the Allies obtained mandates over the very territories they had marked out for themselves in their secret treaties, on the understanding that they should govern them as "a sacred trust of civilization."

The whole story of the seizure of the German colonies is depressing reading and the fact that in practice the Permanent Mandates Commission does exercise considerable supervision over the working of the mandates—as anyone who troubles to read the minutes of the recent session to consider the situation in Syria will realize—does not detract from the responsibilities of Mr. Lloyd George and his colleagues in Paris. These responsibilities would be all the greater if the contrast between the government by Germany before the war and that instituted by the Mandatory Powers—and especially by France and New Zealand—since the war were as great as Dr. Schnee believes. He leaves entirely out of account the universal chaos that resulted from four years of hostilities, but he quotes scores of authorities, not of German nationality, to prove that the natives were far more contented under German rule than they are today, and it must be admitted that he conducts the defence of Germany very ably indeed.

But it is one thing to criticize the Versailles Treaty and it is another to amend it. Dr. Schnee and Mr. W. Harbutt Dawson, who writes a long and bitter introduction, appear to imagine that it would be the simplest thing in the world to hand back her colonies to Germany. They forget that several of the colonies were captured by the Dominions, and that the Union of South Africa, for example, is not likely to give up South West Africa, just to simplify negotiations between Downing Street, the Quai d'Orsay and the Wilhelmstrasse. "It is inconceivable," writes Mr. Dawson, "that Belgium, with a population of seven and a quarter millions, should have an empire of nearly a million square miles; that a decadent country like Portugal, with a population of six millions, should have an empire of equal extent; that France, with a population of thirty-eight millions at the most, which is far from large enough for her home needs, should have an empire of nearly five million square miles, while Germany, the third greatest industrial country in the world, with still a prolific population of some sixty-five millions, should be doomed to perpetual exclusion from the ranks of colonial Powers." Apparently Sir Austen Chamberlain and M. Briand agree with him, since they are alleged to have promised Germany a colonial mandate or two, but we have yet to see how, where and when they will be able to hand back to the Germans enough of their former colonial possessions to satisfy their needs. On this all-important point Dr. Schnee has no suggestions to offer.

THE CENCI

Beatrice Cenci. By Corrado Ricci. 2 vols. Heinemann. 32s. net.

AMONG the many claims which Signor Ricci's learned, patient and severely judicial examination of perhaps the foulest of domestic tragedies has on our attention there is one that may miss acknowledgment. In almost entirely destroying the legend of Beatrice Cenci he has, unintentionally, shown us that Shelley was perfectly right in fixing on the truly tragic element in that legend instead of probing for the

facts. In that wonderful preface to his play, where Shelley, undertaking a task alien to his genius, is found understanding faultlessly the principles on which it must be executed, he wrote:

"It is the restless and anatomizing casuistry with which men seek the justification of Beatrice, yet feel she has done what needs justification; it is in the superstitious horror with which they contemplate alike her wrongs and their revenge, that the dramatic character of what she did and suffered consists.

But Beatrice, it is plain from the researches of Signor Ricci, was not in fact the victim of incestuous passion. In that grim castle in which she and her mother were confined by her father, her modesty was hurt by his gross indifference to her need of privacy; and of discomfort she knew much, while violence to her followed on her natural enough endeavour to secure either a chance of marriage or refuge in a conventual life. But Francesco, as presented by Signor Ricci, is a loathsome beast rather than the supreme incarnation of evil. He will stint, scold and on occasion flog his daughter, and keep her cooped up in the castle; he will require of her certain disgusting services; but, pervert though he be, he shows no disposition towards the infliction on her of the outrage which would justify her crime. And she, it is now made very evident, is no spotless creature. She has her lover in the castle, and it is not under the shock of a particular wrong but through many weeks that she plans with him and others the removal of her father. In short, the actual Beatrice, the actual Francesco, would not have been to Shelley's purpose, had he known them through the vast mass of contemporary documents, hitherto imperfectly examined, through which Signor Ricci has worked his way.

Signor Ricci's book, of necessity nauseating in certain passages, has an undeniable fascination; but its appeal to us is not, as might have been expected, that of the prose material with which a great poet made a great play. What holds us here is no moral question, imaginatively raised, and left unanswered. The two volumes, though overlaid with detail, grip us because Beatrice is at once a woman of great courage fighting for her life and the victim of a fatal error in choosing her line of defence. Had she, we feel, coupled admission of guilt with a recital of the deeds of her father, she could hardly have been sentenced to death. Francesco's character was well enough known. He had much earlier been convicted of unnatural vice, and one way and another had repeatedly escaped due punishment only by paying huge fines. His cupidity, meanness, violence, bestiality were notorious. But she took up the position that she had no motive for desiring his death; and after such a plea it was idle to adduce evidence that he had wronged her. The murder itself was greatly willed, and shows us a Beatrice half-sister to Lady Macbeth; but it was clumsily planned. The failure to make the hole in the balcony through which Francesco was supposed to have fallen large enough; the absurdity of assuming that the body would show no signs of blows; the muddle in disposing of the blood-soaked mattress were certain to lead to detection once the smallest inquiry was made. Beatrice, in fact, was a bungler till she was before her judges, when, for all her error in denying adequate motive for the murder, she became an arresting incarnation of courageous inflexibility. Her conduct there and at her execution at once created the legend, and it will survive Signor Ricci's book, for it is not due to mere ignorance of facts, but arose to satisfy a need of the mind that contemplates such horrors. "This story," wrote Shelley, "is indeed eminently fearful and monstrous: anything like a dry exhibition of it would be insupportable." Here is the dry exhibition, very carefully contrived by a distinguished scholar. But the popular imagination first, in its sentimental fashion, and then the poet's, has expanded the character of Beatrice until she is one of the great symbolical figures of all time. With all gratitude to Signor Ricci, we can but dismiss his Beatrice as another person of the same

name, not recommended to us by the fact that she actually existed. Except as historians or as students of crime, we have no need of her; Shelley's Beatrice is a necessity.

A BUSINESS EMPIRE

The Call of Empire. By Alfred Bigland. Palmer. 5s. net.

ANYONE who has a scheme for paying off the War Debt out of other resources than the taxpayer's pocket deserves at any rate a sympathetic hearing, for we can never remind ourselves of that enormous burden and the enormous period for which it threatens to continue without seriously wondering what the cost is going to be in other things than money. It is a pity that Mr. Bigland should have felt it necessary to begin his book with two chapters of utter nonsense, which have nothing to do with the point and will probably scare away a good many readers before they get far enough to find that the greater part is in an entirely different vein and much better worth reading. He should look, for instance, at the interminable concluding sentence of the first chapter, and tell himself as a sober business man what, if anything, he means by it; and if he actually imagines that the whole trouble with the Spaniards of the Armada period was due to English "resentment . . . at the cruelties imposed on the natives by the Spaniards," he would do well to go into the matter further and learn of the more material interests over which the struggle really took place.

His general argument, shared in some respects by the late Lord Milner, is that democratic finance must develop a new idea; that the State must set about raising a substantial revenue not actually by competing with existing enterprises but by developing its land and water resources, and either leasing or selling them at a profit, and he works out in some detail how this might be done in the Empire, as it has already been done in Cuba and elsewhere, with the aid of a scheme of Imperial Preference. Another proposal is to exploit our enviable national credit for the relief of the taxpayer. Some of his schemes appear practicable, others decidedly dubious. The chief interest of the book is that it is the work of a business man and an ex-M.P., with considerable knowledge of affairs; it has consequently an element of reality lacking in most projects of this kind. Anyone who is interested in Empire Development and the economics of Imperial Preference will certainly unearth enough true ore among Mr. Bigland's miscellaneous dump to make the book worth reading.

MR. DUKES'S NEW PLAY

The Song of Drums—A Heroic Comedy. By Ashley Dukes. Benn. Paper, 3s. 6d. net. Cloth, 5s. net.

MASTER EULENSPIEGEL succeeds aptly to the Regency gallants of Mr. Dukes's past play; he, too, has his load of mischief and he, too, like the amorous servitor whom we lately saw at the Haymarket, makes a conquest for young romance over harsh authority. Tyl Eulenspiegel is here shown as the national clown and national champion of Flanders in the struggle against Spain; he is lover and soldier while he jests. He is the importer of high jinks into the low countries and the receiver of red roses from the hands of tender beauty. Altogether he is synthetic to a quite puzzling extent. As the curtain is ordered down on the roses and raptures at the end of the first act one conceives a vision of the late Lewis Waller; later on one is the more reminded of Mr. Russell Thorndike's harsh world-defiance as Peer Gynt. Tyl's song of drums is the reverberation of a national pride and the challenge to a national revolt. So the ghost

of this odd campaigner might have marched with Garibaldi when it had tired of sporting with the fellows of Grimaldi's craft.

Mr. Dukes has begun at the beginning, or even earlier. A herald (who shows signs of being a minor poet) announces the nativity of Tyl and it takes the play some time to shake off these swaddling-clothes. This is a pity, for the heroic comedy of anti-Spanish intrigue which follows upon Tyl's adolescence is at once lighter and better than the ponderous motion of the prologue and the play is likely to succeed on the stage far more by reason of a bustling end than by virtue of its laboriously cultured style. It is very difficult to lift the writing of costume plays out of the welter of clichés to which they had sunk before Mr. Douglas Fairbanks resolved the author's problem by getting rid of the words altogether and by conducting the proceedings "in camera." Mr. Dukes is not afraid of seeming "the littery gent" and his courage is largely justified. An air of self-consciousness inevitably hangs about the dialogue, because the dramatist is trying to establish a formula that shall be half way between archaic fustian and the new slang for old mouths which is the historical method of Mr. Shaw. On the whole the formula bears fruit.

THE CONSOLATION OF POETRY

Authors Dead and Living. By F. L. Lucas.
Chatto and Windus. 7s. 6d. net.

MR. LUCAS is in the high line of descent from Sainte-Beuve and his pupil, Matthew Arnold. His criticism is attic and urbane, concise and clear, delicate and distinguished. He cherishes tradition, and would welcome genius and novelty. Good sense is his, and felicity of phrasing. Adding Anatole France to his masters, he is ready to allow that criticism is an art of entertainment. The critic, expressing his own tastes and tendencies, revealing his own quality and range, must please or be ignored. And certainly Mr. Lucas, dealing with new and old poets and problems of poetry in chapters too slender in bulk because the conditions of periodical writing will have them so, reveals himself with restraint and charm. Poetry for him is the successful expression in rhythmical language of emotions we can value. Poetry is magic and ideas. It is much that poetry still remains living and loved. But its present state is unsatisfactory. There is too much poetry of the merely literary and minor order. In place of intensity and personality, he finds a niggling subjectivity. High literature brings the essential thrill, the *frisson du beau*, haunting, wonder and the sense of the tragic life. Great poetry springs from disillusion. Hardy, Housman, Walter de la Mare are his chief poets among the living. Two of these express the very passion of despair.

Mr. Lucas quarrels with the Victorians because they laboured to conceal their disillusion. Browning's confident affirmation of life irritates him. The 'In Memoriam' had no business to be more optimistic than Tennyson himself was. Matthew Arnold's "high seriousness" is a little superfluous to those who "see life itself as a chaotic tragedy, happy in little save its irony." Even Mr. Hardy has begun to waver and mysteriously resent the charge of pessimism. Unflinching pessimism, Mr. Lucas insists, is virile. Leopardi was at fault only because he exaggerated and bleated monotonously. "The one thing certain is that nothing is certain." And Pliny continues: "There is nothing more wretched and more proud than man." Philosophy and science discourage. The consolation of religion is left to such as can find consolation in it. For others, Mr. Lucas advocates the consolation of poetry, the power to appreciate the irony of the comedy and the beauty of the tragedy of things. But our disillusion must be decent, he urges. We must believe in the value of intellect, courage, pity, even if we half deny it to ourselves.

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

THE most important thing in the latest gramophone catalogues is the issue of Vaughan Williams's London Symphony, which has been recorded for the Columbia Company by the London Symphony Orchestra, under Sir Dan Godfrey. Apart from a short cut in the epilogue, which, I fancy, has been sanctioned by the composer, the work is recorded complete. The results are, on the whole, satisfactory and one is delighted to be able to play over and examine in detail this beautiful work. A good deal of the poetic atmosphere has evaporated, partly owing to the natural disabilities of the gramophone in that direction, but also through the rather stolid performance given by Sir Dan Godfrey. The music wants far more flexibility and a more careful adjustment of balance. A good many of those delicate figures, which are thrown off like spume from a wave, have lost their spontaneity. The slow movement goes best. The *cor anglais* is not forward enough at the beginning, though the reproduction of its tone is unusually natural. Indeed throughout the work the wood-wind is insufficiently strong and the lovely solo trumpet passages in the slow movement are barely audible. But the greatest blemish is in the *finale*, where the counterpoint figure for the first violins against the march-tune—perhaps the most beautiful invention in the work—is hardly to be heard at all. The percussion seems to have been cut down. After the excellent reproduction of the cymbals in the 'Symphonie Fantastique,' one was disappointed not to hear them at the announcement of the theme marked *poco animato* in the first movement. The "jingles" come out with a curious crunchy noise which is not at all what is intended.

Two string quartets by Haydn have been added to the chamber music section. They are the first two from Opus 76. The first in G major is played by the Budapest String Quartet for the Gramophone Company. The recording of the string tone is hard and brilliant, but the playing is admirable and the work itself wholly delightful. One wishes, however, that the opening of the slow movement did not sound quite so like a harmonium. The Columbia records of the second quartet in D minor are superior as reproduction, and the playing by the Lener Quartet is well up to their reputation. The work itself is rather less interesting than the G major, but there is an exceptionally fine slow movement and the *finale* is in Haydn's most jovial vein. The minuet, on the other hand, is in his country-bumpkin manner and a little heavy. The sixth side of these records is occupied by a badly cut and not too well played performance of the slow movement of Franck's quartet. The Budapest Quartet have more appropriately filled the blank side at the end of the G major with a delightful movement from one of Dittersdorf's quartets.

The orchestral records, apart from the London Symphony, call for little comment. The Columbia Company have issued Nicolai's 'Merry Wives of Windsor' Overture, under Sir Henry Wood and Grieg's 'Norwegian Dances,' under Georg Schneevoigt. I have a soft place in my heart for the former, but all these records are harsh and noisy. The Gramophone Company is specializing in choral records. They can hardly be congratulated on the records of the Pilgrims' Choruses from 'Tannhäuser,' under Mr. Coates. The singing is at times dreadfully flat. Indeed it is only too life-like a reproduction of the sort of performance one gets from an average opera company. The records made by the Westminster Choir are an advance on previous choral reproductions. The peculiar effects of singing heard in a church are faithfully recorded, though whether that is in itself a good thing is a matter for argument. The best records are those of 'In Dulci Jubilo' and Parry's motet, 'Never Weather-beaten Sail.'

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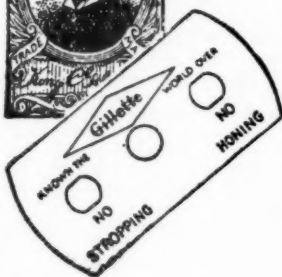
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On the last occasion upon which I had the pleasure of meeting you in general meeting I gave you figures showing that the gross profits had grown from £42,275 in 1921 to £193,667 in 1924. I am glad to be able to say that this progress continues to be maintained, and that this very substantial figure is this year further increased to £216,254.

As indicated in the report before you, this gross profit has to bear rather high debit charges, principally in respect of increased advertising and extra expenditure on wages and cartage, all of which are increases which a Board of Directors has to face.

I am, however, I think, on good ground in believing that you are with me in my opinion that these expenditures, and more particularly those on the advertising and publicity side, are good investments and are of potential value. (Hear, hear.)

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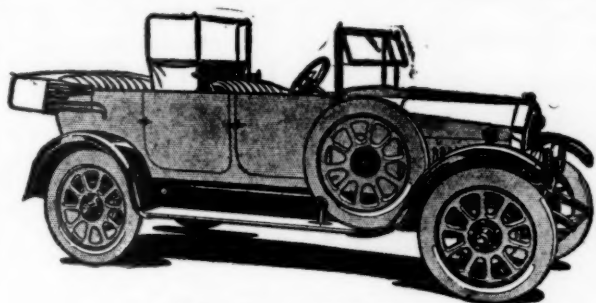
I will now put to you the formal resolutions, including the allocation of the available balance of £31,080 4s. 3d., namely:

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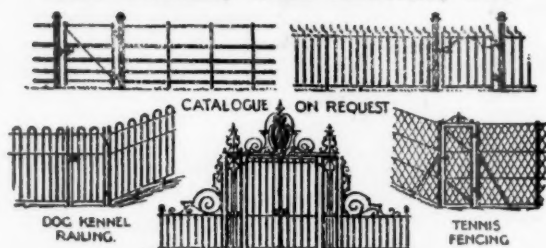
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